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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: PERU'S TAKE ON ECUADOR UNASUR MEETING

Classified By: DCM James Nealon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: DCM met September 18 with MFA Undersecretary for the Americas Javier Leon to discuss the September 15 UNASUR ministerial meeting in Quito. Leon described the meeting as "difficult and unproductive," mainly because Colombia had dug in its heels over Brazil's request for further assurances on the DCA, while Chile was too quickly dismissive of President Garcia's arms control, regional defense forces and non-aggression proposals. Below are selected comments by Leon during the encounter. End Summary.

2. (C) Colombian/US DCA Controversy

-- The Quito UNASUR meeting appeared to be "too hastily put together" in the aftermath of the UNASUR Presidents meeting, that took place in Bariloche just two weeks ago.

-- Ecuador was reasonably polite during the long discussions, but Venezuela was typically bombastic on the DCA and asserted that the bases could be used for staging bombers -- which was the rationale behind Venezuela's recent arms purchases from Russia.

-- The Venezuelans said that Uribe had promised assurances and more details on the DCA at Bariloche.

-- But the Colombian Defense and Foreign Ministers were unwilling to entertain any requests for follow-on information on the DCA, in particular from the Brazilians, who were seeking written assurances regarding the protections in the agreement on cross-border attacks. They verbally assured the ministers that the defense cooperation agreement was not threatening to other states. They said they could not provide assurances until after the document had completed its internal review and been signed. They also said they would have to consult with the United States. According to Leon, there was a general negative reaction to this plan, since (he said) "all agreements have to be submitted to the United nations for publication anyway." Leon emphasized that all attendees want guarantees that U.S. forces at the bases in question won't be deployed outside of Colombia.

-- Brazil pressed Colombia hard to the point that Brazilian FM Amorim became infuriated and later had to apologize to Colombian MOD Silva.

3. (C) Garcia's Proposal

-- Peru actively participated at the meeting and circulated a

letter from President Garcia to the FMs and MODs aimed at preventing an arms race in the region, reducing military expenditures, proposing a non-aggression pact and fielding the idea of a regional defense force ("Fuerza de Paz") to dissuade conflict among the South American States. (Note: We will email a copy of the letter to Peru desk. End Note.)

-- Most of the Ministers reacted positively "to the spirit" of Garcia's letter, except for Chile. The Peruvians were later especially irritated by Chilean MOD Valer's comparison of Garcia's non-aggression idea with the 1938 pact between Hitler and Stalin that divided Poland.

Comment: Hasty and Unproductive

14. (C) Leon said that the UNASUR ministerial followed too closely on the heels of the Presidential meeting in Bariloche, which left them insufficient time to properly staff and prepare. There is no scheduled follow-on meeting as yet. One consequence of the haste was that polemical issues were hashed out verbally but the discussions resulted in no formal written document, making the prospect of follow-through unlikely. Meanwhile, the Peruvians are clearly peeved by what they perceive as Chile's facile dismissal of Garcia's serious common defense pact, non-aggression and arms-curbing initiatives -- exacerbating an already sensitive and prickly relationship.
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